

What's New in the MPDC

DECEMBER 9, 2002

CRIME IN DC DECLINES 7 PERCENT DURING OCTOBER

Auto thefts continued to increase in October, and are up more than 9 percent for the year. For tips on how you can reduce the risk of having your vehicle stolen, click on:

mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/autotheft.shtm

The number of serious crimes reported in DC declined by more than 7 percent in October 2002, when compared with the same month a year earlier, according to preliminary statistics released by the MPDC. In October 2002, a total of 3,554 serious, or "Index," crimes were reported to the police. That compares with 3,833 offenses reported in October 2001 - a reduction of 7.3 percent. Preliminary statistics show that

citywide in October, robberies, aggravated assaults, burglaries and thefts all declined. Sexual assaults, stolen autos and arson offenses increased in October, and homicides were unchanged from the same month a year earlier. Through the first 10 months of 2002, serious crime in DC was down 3.2 percent when compared with the same period of 2001. Four of the seven police districts recorded decreases in crime in October, according to the preliminary figures. Access the latest preliminary statistics, for each of the seven police districts and citywide, at:

mpdc.dc.gov/info/districts/crstats_citywide.shtm

CHIEF RAMSEY REQUESTS DISMISSAL OF ERRONEOUS PHOTO RADAR TICKETS

In letters to the DC Bureau of Traffic Adjudication, Chief Ramsey has formally requested that approximately 1,750 photo radar speeding tickets issued in error in recent weeks be dismissed and that motorists who have already paid the fines be reimbursed. The erroneous citations were issued at two locations since mid-October. Approximately 500 erroneous tickets were issued in the 2500 block of Porter Street, NW, when photo radar officers failed to note that the speed limit there had recently been changed from 25 mph to 30 mph. In addition, approximately 1,250 erroneous tickets were issued in the 3300 block of East Capitol Street, NE, when a data entry error at the ticket processing center incorrectly calculated fines based on a 35 mph speed limit, instead of the actual limit of 40 mph. Although the motorists who received these citations were traveling in excess of the posted speed limit, even with the error in calculation, the MPDC is still requesting that all citations be dismissed. The Department apologizes for the mistake, and encourages motorists who believe they received erroneous tickets to call the Automated Traffic Enforcement Office at (202) 756-5884. Read the complete news release at:

For more information on the photo radar program, including a map showing the locations of all enforcement zones, go to:

mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/speed.shtm

mpdc.dc.gov (Click on News Room)

DC OFFICIALS ANNOUNCE NEW RADIO SYSTEM FOR POLICE AND FIRE/EMS DEPARTMENTS

Chief Ramsey this week joined City Administrator John Koskinen, Deputy Mayor Margret Kellems and other city leaders in announcing a new contract for a major upgrade of the District's public safety radio system. The District has negotiated a \$17 million contract with Motorola for the principal components for the new radio system. The project, scheduled for completion by September 30, 2003, is being paid for as part of the \$45.5 million that Congress appropriated to the District for emergency preparedness information technology initiatives. While much of the project involves enhancements to the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department's 800 MHz radio system, the MPDC will benefit from upgrades to its portable radios and improved "radio interoperability" with the Fire/EMS Department and other agencies, meaning that personnel in different agencies can more easily communicate via radio during major incidents or emergencies. The upgrade will also provide the platform for the MPDC to migrate to contiguous, wide-band (700-800 MHz) radio communications in the future. For more information on the project, contact the DC Office of the Chief Technology Officer at (202) 727-2277.

The MPDC provides various ways for the public to contact the police. In addition to 9-1-1 for emergencies, the MPDC operates the 3-1-1 police non-emergency number plus a variety of hotlines. For more information, click on:

mpdc.dc.gov/info/phone/phone.shtm

WATCH OUT FOR PICKPOCKETS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

For a more complete list of winter holiday safety tips for shoppers, travelers and when you're at home, visit:
mpdc.dc.gov/info/season/winter.shtm

A professional pickpocket is not necessarily the sleazy person lurking in dark doorways that we may expect. He (or she!) is likely to be an "average" person in both appearance and manner. Because of their chosen "line of work," pickpockets spend a great deal of time studying how to blend into a crowd, therefore eliminating the possibility of detec-

tion before they can get away. And during the holiday season, pickpockets can be out in full force—trying to blend in with the crowds and targeting easy victims. For example, teams of thieves are often at work during the holidays. A common "MO" is for one thief to "accidentally" get stuck in a revolving door or drop an item on the sidewalk—at which point, the partner picks the wallet or purse of an unsuspecting victim who has stopped. Many thieves also target individuals who are overburdened with packages. Learn more about the ways of pickpockets and thieves, and what you can do to protect yourself, by going to:

mpdc.dc.gov/info/street/theft_pickpockets.shtm

NEWS & NOTES

- **Forum on Crime and Prevention Postponed:** Because of scheduling conflicts, the Forum on Crime and Prevention, originally scheduled for the evening of Thursday, December 12, has been postponed. For information, call the Mayor's Office of Community Outreach at (202) 442-8150.

Information, ideas or comments about this service?

E-mail Kevin Morison, MPDC's Director of Corporate Communications, at kevin.morison@dc.gov.

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